

Report

At the July 2003 NASH State Systems K-16 Summer Institute, the Education Trust released preliminary findings from its K-16 Data Flow Project that link information on high school course-taking patterns, postsecondary performance, and teacher preparation programs. Kentucky was one of six states selected and funded to participate in the project. The staffs from the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board, Morehead State University, and the school districts of Elliott, Morgan, and Pike Counties contributed to the project. The other participating states were Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas.

Research in Kentucky addressed the following three questions.

- 1) *What is the impact of high school preparation on postsecondary readiness and success?*
Many national studies conclude “that the quality and intensity of the high school curriculum is the single best predictor of student success in postsecondary education” (Somerville, “NASH K-16 Data Analysis Project,” July 2003). Research undertaken in Kentucky for the Education Trust project used ACT data and high school transcripts to correlate course-taking patterns in secondary school with postsecondary remediation and persistence rates. Results indicate that Kentucky students who enroll in a rigorous high school curriculum outperform peers who do not. This finding directly supports the P-16 Council’s March 2001 recommendation that Kentucky create one rigorous high school curriculum for all students.
- 2) *What is the impact of remediation on student success?*
Researchers examined postsecondary educational outcomes for a statewide cohort of recent high school graduates. Findings from this phase of the project confirmed national studies indicating that students who enroll in remedial courses are less likely to stay in college and earn degrees than students who do not need remedial work.
- 3) *What do we need to know about regional “flow” and teacher preparation programs?*
Research in Kentucky concentrated on three rural school districts (Elliott, Morgan, and Pike Counties) and identified the postsecondary institutions that graduates from those districts are most likely to attend and the institutions from which the districts receive most of their teachers. Research confirmed that a single institution – Morehead State University – prepares the majority of teachers in these districts. Morehead is using this information to improve its teacher preparation programs and expand its partnerships with local school districts.

Christina Whitfield will present findings from this project.